

What is Claimed is:

1. Ring binder mechanism with a housing (10) having a C- or U-shaped cross-section with spring-elastic bendable flanks (28) for two carrier rails (20), which carrier rails on their facing longitudinal edges lie against each other forming a linkage axis (22) and with their away-facing longitudinal edges (24) engage in mounting grooves (26) in the housing flanks (28), and with at least two half-rings (16) longitudinally spaced apart and rigidly connected with each of the carrier rails (20) and which extend through openings (12) in a housing wall (13) and pairwise form a ring (14), wherein the carrier rails (20) are limitedly pivotable against each other about the linkage axis (22) between an open position and a closed position upon overcoming a spring force produced by the bending open of the housing flanks (28), while taking along the half-rings (16), and wherein at least one blocking element (32, 32') is provided slideable via operating element (18) essentially parallel to the linkage axis (22), slideable relative to the housing (10) and to the carrier rails (20) which, in the closed position, protrudes into a free space (34) formed between the carrier rails (20) and the housing wall (13) with blockage of the pivot movement of the carrier rails (20) and, in the open position, unblocks the pivot movement of the carrier rails (20) about the linkage axis (22), thereby characterized, that at least one blocking element (32, 32') is pre-tensioned in the direction of the closed position under the influence of a closing spring (36, 36').
2. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 1, thereby characterized, that the operating element (18) is formed as a operating lever pivotable with respect to the housing (10).

3. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 1 or 2, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') is slideable in the open direction via the operating element (18) against the force of the closing spring (36, 36'), and is thereby unlockable.
4. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 1 through 3, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') when in the open position lies against an opening detent (38, 110) under the influence of the closing spring (36, 36').
5. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 4, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') is releaseable in the closing direction via the operating element (18) out of the opening detent (38, 40) against the force of the closing spring (36, 36').
6. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 5, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') is automatically lockable in the closed direction under the influence of the pre-tensioned closing spring (36, 36').
7. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 6, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) includes an opening arm (40) abutting against the carrier rails (20) in the open position and which pivots these from the closed into the open position while overcoming of the spring force produced by the housing flanks (28).
8. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 7, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) includes a closing arm (42) abutting against the carrier rails (20) in the closing direction and which pivots these

from the open position into the closed position while overcoming of the spring force produced by the housing flanks (28).

9. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 1 through 8, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') is slideable in the closing direction against the force of the closing springs (36, 36'), and thereby releasable out of the opening detent (38, 110), directly by operation of the half-rings (16), or indirectly via the carrier rails (20).
10. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 9, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) in the open and/or closed direction exhibits at least two operating positions effective in different angular positions for a consequential operation of the at least one blocking element (32, 32') and the carrier rails (20).
11. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 10, thereby characterized, that the blocking element (32) is provided on a lever arm (100) rigidly connected with the operating lever (18), and that the operating lever (18) is limitedly pivotable relative to the housing (10) and to the carrier rails (20) in the sliding direction of the blocking element (32).
12. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 11, thereby characterized, that the blocking spring (36) is tensioned in between a housing fixed abutment and an operating lever fixed abutment (104, 102).
13. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 12, thereby characterized, that the blocking spring (36) is a shank spring.

14. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 13, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) includes a control curve (108) guided on one control edge (106) of the housing (10), via which the operating lever (18) and the blocking element (32) during pivoting against the force of the closing spring (36) are slideable from a closing position in the direction of the open position.
15. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 14, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is rigidly connected with an opening arm (40) acting, in the opening direction, against the carrier rails.
16. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 15, thereby characterized, that the opening arm (40) is provided in such a separation from the blocking element (32), that the blocking element (32) in the closed position of the operating lever (18) and the carrier rails (20) is insertable in the free space (34) between the carrier rails (20) and the housing wall (13) under the influence of the closing spring (36), and in the open position abuts against a housing-fixed detent (110) under the influence of the closing spring (36).
17. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 16, thereby characterized, that the blocking element (32) is simultaneously a closing arm (42) acting in the closing direction against the carrier rails (20).
18. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 17, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) includes at least one pivot pin element (112), which lies in the open position of the operating lever (18) against a housing fixed mounting surface (114) under the influence of

the closing spring (36) and forms a pivot axis for the blocking element (32) during the disengagement or unblocking and closing movement.

19. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 18, thereby characterized, that the pivot pin element (112), in the closed position of the operating lever (18), is raised from the housing-fixed mounting surface (114).
20. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 19, thereby characterized, that the control curve (108) is provided on a control arm (120) extending through a wall opening (116) of the housing (10) and through a through-hole (118) in the linkage axis (22) area between the carrier rails (20).
21. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 20, thereby characterized, that the control edge (106) is formed by a preferably curved border edge of the wall opening (116).
22. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 22, thereby characterized, that the blocking element (32) is provided on a lever arm (100) extending through a wall opening (116) in the housing.
23. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 22, thereby characterized, that the housing fixed detent (110) is formed by a preferably curved border edge of the wall opening (116).
24. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 23, thereby characterized, that the blocking element (32) abuts in the closed direction, under the influence of the closing spring (36), against a housing-fixed end-stop (122).

25. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 24, thereby characterized, that the end abutment (122) is wedge-shaped in the closing direction.
26. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 24 or 25, thereby characterized, that the end abutment (122) is formed by a bowing out of the housing wall (13) protruding into the free space (34).
27. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 11 through 26, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is mounted and guided on the housing (10) in the intermediate area between the rings (14), and includes an operating arm (18') extending through the loop of one of the rings (14).
28. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 27, thereby characterized, that the operating arm (18') is directed away from the lever arm (100) carrying the blocking element (32).
29. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 27, thereby characterized, that the operating arm (18') faces the same side as the blocking element (32) carrying lever arm (100).
30. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 10, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element is rigidly provided on a control rod, preferably formed as a pull rod, which via the operating lever (18), under the influence of the closing spring, is limitedly slideable in the longitudinal direction of the carrier rails (20) relative to the housing (10).
31. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 30, thereby characterized, that the closing spring is a pressure spring.

32. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 31, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is provided at one end of the control rod and that the closing spring is tensioned in between the other end of the control rod and a housing fixed abutment.
33. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 32, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) pulls against the control rod in the open position against the pressure force of the closing spring.
34. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 30 through 33, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is rigidly connected with an opening arm acting in the opening direction against the carrier rails.
35. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 30 through 34, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is rigidly connected with a closing arm acting in the closing direction against the carrier rails.
36. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 2 through 10, thereby characterized, that at least one blocking element (32, 32') is connected with the operating lever (18) via a tensioning member (44, 44') and a closing spring (36, 36') integrated in the tension member.
37. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 36, thereby characterized, that each blocking element (32, 32') is associated with a tension member (44, 44').
38. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 37, thereby characterized, that at least two of the tension members (44, 44') are unitarily connected with each other, preferably via a connecting bridge (46).

39. Ring binder mechanism according to Claims 36 through 38, thereby characterized, that each blocking element (32, 32') is associated with a closing spring (36, 36').
40. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 36 through 39, thereby characterized, that the tension member (44, 44') is a piece of wire.
41. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 36 through 40, thereby characterized, that the closing spring (36, 36') is a shank spring integrated in the tension member (44, 44'), of which one leg (48) is connected with the operating lever (18) and the other leg (50) is supported on a housing-fixed or carrier rail-fixed mount (52) and is fixed spaced apart from the support point on the associated blocking element (32, 32').
42. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 36 through 41, thereby characterized, that the at least one blocking element (32, 32') is formed as a sliding element guided in a guide slot or through-hole (54) between the two carrier rails (20), which exhibits a wedge shaped closing surface (36) facing in the closing direction, which in the closed position engages in the free space (34).
43. Ring binder mechanism according to Claim 42, thereby characterized, that the sliding element exhibits a face (58) which is wedge or arrow-shaped in the closing direction, and that the guide through-hole (54), on its bordering edge (38) facing the end face (58), exhibits a thereto complimentary arrow shape.
44. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 36 through 43, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is



rigidly connected with an opening arm (40) which lies, when moved in the opening direction, against the carrier rails (20).

45. Ring binder mechanism according to one of Claims 36 through 44, thereby characterized, that the operating lever (18) is rigidly connected with a closing arm (42) which lies, when moved in the closing direction, against the carrier rails (20).